

**South to South: Connections in the Ordinary**

**Fostering Empathy by Encouraging Travel through Design**

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## **Introduction**

Growing up in a small town in Etowah County, Alabama, learning about other cultures and international travel was not made a priority in my schooling or life in general. I graduated second in my high school class of sixty-four students with the only diversity being two classmates of Hispanic descent. Etowah County, as a whole, lacks in diversity with a population of 80.7% white alone according to 2020 Census data.<sup>1</sup> As I got older and had the opportunities to experience more diversity and widen my worldview, I was able to understand other people from a new perspective which I believe increased my empathy. One formative trip that I was able to experience was my first international trip to Seoul, South Korea, for a study abroad program in July 2019. This trip was something I didn't anticipate ever getting to do in my lifetime. While in South Korea, I was able to experience so many new and exciting things. However, I was also surprised to find similarities to my experiences living in Alabama despite being on the other side of the world. These connections between South Korea and Alabama sparked the idea of this research. I was curious how I could share these similarities that I had noticed with people in my local area as a case study to help expose them to other cultures in a way that would decrease fear of travel and increase feelings of empathy.

My research was informed by my trip to South Korea. It helped me understand these transnational connections so that I could use design to help other people like myself learn and experience new cultures. I conducted a literature review on three different topics to help further inform my designs. The first review was on travel fears and how that relates to people from

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Quick Facts: Etowah County, Alabama, 2020. Prepared by Social Explorer, accessed August 18, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/etowahcountyalabama>.

insular communities like those in northeast Alabama. Second, I reviewed the existing literature on empathy regarding what it is, if it can be cultivated, and how travel affects it. Lastly, the history of transnational interactions between South Korea, the United States, and specifically Alabama was reviewed to help understand how design can help further these relations. A visual exploration informed what products and designs already exist that help with travel and culture as well as review of exhibitions that help elicit empathetic feelings. To help understand the target demographic of people from northeast Alabama, I created personas using statistical data. Through this research, I argue that the creation of this exhibition helps facilitate designed sensory connections between two countries in a familiar and low-risk atmosphere through recognition of recognizable motifs to people from Alabama which can help bring exposure to another culture, decrease travel fear, and foster empathy. My hope is that the exhibition can serve as a model for other destinations, promotion of travel, and ultimately empathy.

### **Literature Review**

Many studies have been written on the subjects of travel, fear, empathy, and transnational relations, in various combinations. This review focuses on the four components that inform the design solution to decreasing fear and increasing empathy through transnational connections. The four components include: the various studies that discuss fears that hinder travel motivation, defining empathy through literary consensus and how empathy can be fostered, as well as how transnational connections between South Korea and Alabama are used as a case study for this design thesis. This literature review helps inform how design can help decrease fear while increasing empathy by creating transnational connections between two distinct places in a personal and inviting manner.

## Travel Fears

In order to better understand what keeps people from traveling, a review of fear as it relates to travel was conducted. This knowledge helps inform how design can address the issue of travel fears in an effective manner. In *The Biology of Fear*, Ralph Adolphs argues the debate on the definition of fear includes whether fear is considered a basic emotion. While many studies have been conducted on the concept of fear in general, relatively little research has focused on fear as it relates to travel.<sup>2</sup> Literature concerning fear and anxiety related to travel reveals the in-depth factors that inform what might hinder one from traveling. Two distinct studies have added to the foundational exploration of this subject. David A. Fennell studied the various aspects of fear in regard to travel to create the *Model of Travel Fear*.<sup>3</sup> Digging into the specifics of what forms the fears around travel, Fennell notes that perceived risk is the hinge to the nature of fear towards travel. The perceived risk of unfamiliar food, safety, and weather were some of the top mentioned. However, Fennell notes that knowledge is what helps moderate the “relationship between risk and hesitation.” This references a study by Jehn-Yih Wong and Ching Yeh in which they used structural equation modeling data from 504 tourists assessing tourist risk perception in regard to hesitation towards certain destinations. They concluded that despite risk being difficult to eliminate, increased tourist knowledge helped mitigate perceived risk and hesitation. Perceived risk is used as a defining element of the nature of fear. Fennell proceeds to break down the types of travel fear into two types: *Type 1 Fear* is Fear as Nervousness and *Type 2 Fear* is Fear as Horror. Within *Type 1*, anxiety based travel concerns based on their studies were

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<sup>2</sup>Ralph Adolphs, “The Biology of Fear,” *Current Biology* 23, no. 2 (2013): 79–93.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2012.11.055>.

<sup>3</sup> David A. Fennell, “Towards a Model of Travel Fear,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 66 (2017): 140–50.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.07.015>.

found to include (1) fear of what types of meat would be served (2) communication difficulties with servers (3) fear of getting shots if immunization are required for travel (4) nervousness about the take off and landing of the flight (5) anxiety about the perception of “otherness” towards their destination involving an “us vs. them” mentality.<sup>4</sup> This helps specify fears that design can help lessen in order to increase interest in travel to particular places. In order to diffuse anxiety, the defensive directive is to approach the fear instead of to avoid it.<sup>5</sup> Wong and Yeh make note that while current informational forums are focused on using technology and web based interfaces, face-to-face distribution of information is more helpful in reducing distrust of the information presented.<sup>6</sup> Disseminating knowledge about a new culture or destination in a low-risk and familiar environment can help dispel some perceived risk, fears, or held beliefs.

Another helpful study in understanding perceived risk that hinders travel is entitled *Heterogeneity in risk and safety perceptions of international tourists*. A data-driven segmentation of the variations in the population of tourists was studied in regard to their perceived risk of international travel. The study states that “Travelers select destinations that best match their needs, offer the most benefits, and have the lowest possible costs or risks.”<sup>7</sup> Within tourism research, segmentation of the market has been created based on risk assessment. Two segments identified by researchers Lepp and Gibson are the “organized mass tourist” and the “independent mass tourist.” Both of these segments prefer familiarity when deciding destinations and typically travel within more predictable environments which are referred to as “environmental bubble.”

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<sup>4</sup>The term “otherness” is taken directly from the study by Fennell. It is in no way intended as a derogatory term from myself, but used in regards to how perceptions of the people studied in situations outside of their own culture.

<sup>5</sup> Fennell, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Jehn-Yih Wong and Ching Yeh. “Tourist hesitation in destination decision making,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 36, no. 1 (2009): 6-23.

<sup>7</sup> Cláudia Seabra, Sara Dolnicar, José Luís Abrantes, and Elisabeth Kastenholtz. “Heterogeneity in risk and safety perceptions of international tourists.” *Tourism Management* 36 (2013): 502.

Notable risks mentioned by this group include health, war and political instability, and strange food.<sup>8</sup> Looking at the target demographic of people from northeast Alabama for this thesis research, the most informative study that was found related to inhabitants of central Alabama. In a study on the travel habits of people from the American South, William W. Hill analyzed vacationers specifically from central Alabama and Mississippi. Noting the decrease in international travel for this segment, southern vacationers historically travel to nearby locations such as the Gulf Coast panhandle, the Appalachian Mountains in Tennessee and North Carolina, as well as the Ozarks in Missouri. Relating back to the segmentations by Lepp and Gibson, predictability and familiarity seem to be consistent with Southern travel decisions. Making this segmentation group aware of cultural connections between themselves and other destinations may lessen the fears and perceived risks and increase interests in visiting a new country. This helped inform the need for a designed sensory experience that includes recognizable and familiar motifs allowing the user to understand the information in context of their own culture in relation to another.

## **Empathy**

In my designs, I created a designed sensory experience that is used to help decrease fear and increase empathy while encouraging travel for people in Alabama. In order to better understand what empathy is, why it's important, and how it can be cultivated, existing literature on the topic was reviewed. Many people have researched the topic of empathy to help better understand what empathy actually is. The following review will look at studies around the concept of empathy and what consensus has been reached in regard to the definition and its components. As evidenced in this review, empathy has the potential to grow through

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 504.



cross-cultural experiences and connections that travel can bring.

### **What is Empathy?**

Empathy has been defined in several ways with varied definitions within academia and society at large. In a study conducted by members of Coventry University in which a consensus for the definition of empathy was sought, one of the reasons for the discrepancies was the differences in which “researchers and practitioners” think of the concept of empathy. This leads to differences in research methods and how it is implemented in practice when it comes to academic situations and treatment. Jakob Hakansson Eklund and Martina Summer Meranius conducted a similar study in 2020 published in *Patient Education and Counseling* in which they gathered 1,507 studies on empathy and narrowed them down to fifty-two relevant ones to compare. Through this comparison they discovered four common themes that all studies shared when defining empathy. Out of the fifty-two definitions, Eklund and Meranius identified 30 sub-themes then narrowed it down to four seen throughout all definitions. All of them concluded that empathy (1) understands, (2) feels, (3) shares the other person's feelings, and (4) is able to have self-other differentiation. With these commonalities in mind, they agree that the consensus definition of empathy is “to understand, feel, and share what someone else feels, with self-other differentiation.”<sup>9</sup> This definition helps guide the research and design by informing that the design should include ways to help users better understand and share in the feelings of others while being able to differentiate between the two cultures.

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<sup>9</sup>Jakob Hakansson Eklund and Martina Summer Meranius, “Toward a Consensus on the Nature of Empathy: A Review of Reviews.” *Patient Education and Counseling*, 2020, 7. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2020.08.022>.

## **Cultivating Empathy**

How can design be used to help cultivate empathy in others? Is cultivation of empathy possible, in general? This question has been debated amongst scholars for years. Some believe that empathy is beneficial to morality and has positive effects on society while others argue that it is ambiguous and has unreliable results.<sup>10</sup> Based on the following review of literature, I believe that empathy can be cultivated and that design can play a part in increasing it.

In a response to critics of empathy, scholar Jing Hu specifically reacts to philosopher Jesse Prinz's claims that empathy is unreliable because "it is biased toward people with whom one has a special relation."<sup>11</sup> He argued that empathy was only aimed towards people close geographically or culturally, and did not extend to people outside of those contexts. This was based on the example of the reaction that Americans had towards the natural catastrophe of hurricane Katrina compared to the Indian Ocean tsunami both which occurred in 2004. While Katrina's death toll totaled 1,833 people, the loss of life was significantly larger than that for the Indian Ocean tsunami at 315,000. Prinz uses this as evidence that empathy only targets those close to us based on the strong support shown from Americans in regard to this event compared to the statistically worse disaster of the tsunami a world away. However, Hu argues that other factors should be taken into account when looking at this critical example of empathy. News coverage of these events plays a significant role in how the public reacts. Disproportionate attention affects the amount of public concern shown. Hu believes that empathy is malleable and has potential for growth. He acknowledges other similar criticisms of the limitations of empathy that also focus on the proximity effect but points out that the claims by Prinz have not been

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<sup>10</sup> Jing Hu, "Empathy for Non-Kin, the Faraway, the Unfamiliar, and the Abstract—An Interdisciplinary Study on Mencian Moral Cultivation and a Response to Prinz." *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 17 (2018): 350.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 351.

supported by empirical evidence. These limitations can be approached with cultivation of empathy in others. “Whether we like, approve, feel closely related to, or root for someone affects how we experience empathy for them. Nevertheless, this is not necessarily problematic - it does mean that one must come to inconsistent conclusions or have contradictory moral motivations after empathizing with different sides.”<sup>12</sup> According to researchers Gonzalez, Riggle, and Rostosky in the study *Cultivating Positive Feelings and Attitudes: A Path to Prejudice Reduction and Ally Behavior*, positive empathy, as distinct from sympathy, had a positive correlation to “prosocial behavior, social connectedness, and subjective well being.”<sup>13</sup> They recognized four steps in increasing positive attitudes towards outgroups: “(a) increasing knowledge and understanding, (b) focusing on values, (c) understanding privilege and its role in oppression, and (d) cultivating empathy and empathic joy.”<sup>14</sup> Increasing one’s knowledge about a group when interaction wasn’t available proved as an effective method of increasing positive feelings towards that group. In this manner, presenting information to help participants make positive connections could help increase empathy towards others by facilitating the interaction through my designed exhibition in convenient locations in relation to the target audience.

### **Can Travel Affect Empathy?**

Travel has allowed more cross-cultural interactions for me than I had previously had in my hometown in Alabama. I contribute this to helping increase my own empathy as it has helped broaden my worldview and allowed me to see different perspectives. But what does the academic world have to say about travel and empathy? Can travel increase empathetic feelings within

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<sup>12</sup> Hu, 353.

<sup>13</sup> Kirsten A. Gonzalez, Ellen D. B. Riggle, and Sharon S. Rostosky. 2015. “Cultivating Positive Feelings and Attitudes: A Path to Prejudice Reduction and Ally Behavior,” *Translational Issues in Psychological Science, Prejudice and Discrimination*, 1 (4): 375. doi:10.1037/tps0000049.

<sup>14</sup> Gonzalez, 376.

someone? Through a review of existing journals and studies, I believe that travel does have a positive impact on empathy.

On cross-cultural experiences, Gita Maharaja conducted a qualitative study on 150 university students who had participated in travel abroad programs to assess whether the students had gained enhanced “intercultural competence and personal development.” The researcher gathered written essays by students upon their return from their study abroad trips. In the essays, the students answered four questions including two that are most pertinent to this research: *1. How has studying abroad affected your views about the host culture?* *2. How has studying abroad affected your thoughts about cultural differences?* In regard to views on the host culture, 80% reported awareness of differences in values and behaviors while also noticing similarities between their own culture and that of the host. While the response to their thoughts about cultural differences were as follows: improved empathy, greater appreciation and respect for the host culture; better understanding and acceptance of differences; and open-mindedness; change in world view and better appreciation of one's own culture.<sup>15</sup> *In Becoming Intercultural: An Integrative Theory of Communication and Crosscultural Adaptation*, author Young Yun Kim discusses the adaptive motivation of being a stranger in a host environment. Kim describes the development of emotional coorientation of strangers with their host culture and the local people and how it increases their ability to empathize with their surrounding cultural products such as the art, music, and recreational activities as well as the humor, joy, and happiness along with

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<sup>15</sup> Gita Maharaja, "The Impact of Study Abroad on College Students' Intercultural Competence and Personal Development," *International Research and Review* 7, no. 2 (2018): 18-41, accessed October 29, 2021, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1188735.pdf>.

their despair, frustration, and disappointment.<sup>16</sup> This study helped inform the use of incorporating elements such as art, music, and sports as a way to increase empathetic feelings.

In an observational study conducted by Inge Janssen, Dutch students were observed in cross cultural settings involving non-Dutch perspectives. Janssen observed that affective empathy was positively influenced by cross-cultural experiences but that the correlation influenced women rather than men.<sup>17</sup> However, no data on cross-cultural experiences and empathy in relation to men from the United States could be found. This research would need to be continued into the future. In a personal essay submitted to the Messiah University's Covid Chronicles, Beth Transue credits her travels abroad with her increased empathy during the Covid pandemic. She relates that she, along with her husband, paid close attention early on during the spread of the virus in China due to having spent three weeks in Hangzhou, China.<sup>18</sup> I argue that these studies and anecdotes support the importance of showing that cross-cultural experiences are effective in the cultivation of empathy in others, and that design has an opportunity to facilitate these experiences when travel isn't immediately available.

### **Transnationalism between Alabama and South Korea**

My exhibition design uses designed sensory experiences to help introduce the similarities between Alabama and South Korean cultures to the people of Northeast Alabama, and therefore helps to create transnational connections between the two regions. To better understand how we can further these transnational relations, a review of the past and current relations between Alabama and South Korea was conducted. According to Miriam Tedeschi, Ekaterina Vorobeve &

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<sup>16</sup> Young Yun Kim, *Becoming intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation* (Sage Publications, 2000), 113.

<sup>17</sup> Inge Janssen, "Empathic Responses in Intercultural Contexts." (Master's thesis, Wageningen University & Research, 2014), accessed October 29, 2021, <https://edepot.wur.nl/352732>.

<sup>18</sup> Beth Transue, "Travel Equals Empathy," Messiah University-Covid Chronicles, May 11, 2020, accessed October 28, 2021, <https://mosaic.messiah.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=covid>.

Jussi S. Jauhiainen, transnationalism is defined as “cross-border (sociocultural, political, and/or economic) activities, practices, and behaviours that are meaningful, affect the identity and sense of belonging of people, and are carried out on a regular (not exceptional) basis in the everyday lives of individuals.”<sup>19</sup> Transnational relations between South Korea and the United States have had a long and storied history dating back to the late nineteenth century in which the two countries formed the 1882 Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United States of America and Korea to help protect U.S. ships passing through Korean waters as well as encourage the potential for trade between the two nations.<sup>20</sup> Continuing into the early 1900s, the American influence in Korea kept growing in part to the presence of American Christian missionaries, mainly Presbyterian and Methodist, that had been allowed by King Kojong in order to ensure assistance from the United States in case of any threat towards Korean independence and to help modernize Korea.<sup>21</sup> In 1950, President Truman sent U.S. Troops to help the South Korean military defend the 38th parallel from North Korean invasion.<sup>22</sup> The two countries are still military allies to this day, and South Korea is the United States’ seventh largest trading partner.<sup>23</sup> As Alabama is a part of the United States, this information helps inform the historical knowledge of the two nationalities as whole, but a further look into the relations between Alabama and South Korea helps to inform the purpose of my exhibition.

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<sup>19</sup> Miriam Tedeschi, Ekaterina Vorobeva, and Jussi S. Jauhiainen, "Transnationalism: current debates and new perspectives." *GeoJournal* (August 2020): 6, accessed November 1, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-020-10271-8>.

<sup>20</sup> Gary D. Walter, R.W. Shufeldt, Shin Chen, and Chin Hong Chi, "The Korean Special Mission to the United States of America in 1883," *Journal of Korean Studies* (1969-1971) 1, no. 1 (1969): 89, accessed November 2, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23849479>.

<sup>21</sup> Akifumi Nagata, "American Missionaries in Korea and US-Japan Relations 1910–1920." *The Japanese Journal of American Studies*, 16 (2005): 160, accessed November 2, 2021, <http://www.jaas.gr.jp/jjas/PDF/2005/No.16-159.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> "US Enters Korean Conflict," National Archives, last modified May 19, 2021, accessed November 2, 2021, <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/korean-conflict#background>.

<sup>23</sup> Mark E. Manyin, Mary Beth Nikitin, Emma Chanlett-Avery, Ian E. Rinehart, and William H. Cooper. "U.S.-South Korea Relations." *Congressional Research Service (CRS) Reports and Issue Briefs*, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Reports and Issue Briefs, (2013), accessed November 1, 2021, <https://search-ebscohost-com.lib-proxy.jsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.332378880&site=eds-live>.

Transnational relations between Alabama and South Korea have been largely economic-based. Korean automotive company, Hyundai Motor, chose the city of Montgomery as the location for its first manufacturing site in the United States after considering fifty other cities during their search.<sup>24</sup> The presence of Hyundai and their many suppliers has grown the Korean population within Alabama, namely in the Montgomery area.<sup>25</sup> According to 2020 US Census data, 1.5% of Alabama's population is Asian.<sup>26</sup> Data on the specific Korean population could not be verified. A-KEEP, the Alabama-Korea Education and Economic Partnership, is an organization located in Montgomery that aims to help provide multicultural diversity programming to people of both Alabama and South Korea. The non-profit was formed in 2011 after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Alabama Department of Education and the Gyeongbuk Provincial Office of Education in South Korea.<sup>27</sup> Korean automotive manufacturing has brought many jobs to Alabama, but its cultural impact on the state isn't as noticeable in small town Alabama. This presents a unique opportunity for design to help bring awareness of this culture to the communities in the Northeast area.

I chose the northeast Alabama area as my target demographic for thesis research because it is where I've spent a majority of my life, therefore giving me unique insight into how design can influence the community. Northeastern Alabama comprises Blount, Calhoun, Cullman, DeKalb, Etowah, Jackson, Limestone, Madisan, Marshall, and Morgan counties. This region contains a dearth of diversity representing an opportunity to fill the need for exposure to other

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<sup>24</sup> Hyunjo Yang, "Benchmarking Alabama Governments' Commitment to Foreign Companies in the Auto Industry," University of Incheon (2014), accessed November 1, 2021, [http://nepalstudycenter.unm.edu/MissPdfFiles/alabama-car-industryNLIssue3\\_06\\_pdf.pdf](http://nepalstudycenter.unm.edu/MissPdfFiles/alabama-car-industryNLIssue3_06_pdf.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Silvia Giagnoni, *Here we may rest: Alabama immigrants in the age of HB 56*. (Montgomery, AL: NewSouth Books, 2017), 186.

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<sup>27</sup> "Our Mission, Vision, and Values" Alabama-Korea Education and Economic Partnership, accessed August 25, 2021, <https://www.akeep.org/about-akeep>.

cultures. My primary focus revolves around Etowah and Calhoun counties. Both counties have relatively homogenous populations with little diversity. According to 2020 Census data, Etowah County's ethnic demographics included 80.7% White alone, 15.7% Black or African American, 4.1% Hispanic or Latino, and 0.8% Asian alone. Similarly, Calhoun County contains 75.1% White alone, 21.3% Black or African American, 4.1% Hispanic or Latino, and 0.9% Asian alone. While no data on the travel habits of these counties could be found, the previously mentioned study by William W. Hill on the typical vacations of southern travelers can help to compensate for the lack of specific information. According to Hill, 78.9% of the 481 respondents typically traveled less than 600 miles to their destination, and less than 6.8% traveled over 1,000 miles or greater. Although social media and other forms of media allow for exposure to occur, seeing connections between two specific cultures isn't a common occurrence. Especially one that is tailored to a specific audience. Due to the insular nature of the area, the creation of an exhibition may best reach the target audience. A pop-up style exhibit could be placed at local county fairs or town gatherings which would allow for the audience to encounter a designed experience featuring new culture information in a familiar setting to help facilitate curiosity.

### **Personas**

To better understand the people of Northeastern Alabama and how a designed sensory experience might benefit the cultivation of travel and empathy, I have created personas based on anecdotal situations informed by statistical data from Etowah and Calhoun counties as well as previous conversations and interactions I have had with people from the target area. Rusty the Local Business Owner and Ashton the Bank Teller show two perspectives in regards to culture, travel, and their ties to Alabama. By creating these personas, the design and elements of the



show are more clearly informed to help present the transnational information in an effective manner so that fear decreases and empathy increases.

Rusty was born and raised in Gadsden, the largest city within Etowah County situated in Northeast Alabama.<sup>28</sup> He is Caucasian and forty-two years old. He attended Auburn University where he received his degree in Painting but didn't pursue it as a career. Instead, he worked in his family's local business, Pool Mart, eventually taking over this business after his father's retirement. Rusty loves being from Alabama and prides himself on being steeped in Southern traditions such as tailgating at Auburn University every fall. He loves baseball and travels to Atlanta frequently to support his favorite team, the Atlanta Braves. He has traveled frequently throughout the United States for business but has only traveled to the Bahamas, internationally, for vacation within the last three years. He knows very little about Korean culture other than what he has seen on television about BTS and other Korean pop groups. He has expressed negative views on these groups as being too feminine and not his style of musical taste.

Ashton was born and raised in Alabama. Born in downtown Birmingham, she grew up in Altoona, a small town in Etowah County. She now resides in Jacksonville, a town within Calhoun County.<sup>29</sup> She is thirty years old and is Caucasian. She has only received her high school diploma and has no further education. Currently, she works as a bank teller for a local bank, but hopes to move up within the company. Ashton married her high school sweetheart, but they have

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<sup>28</sup>U.S. Census Bureau.

Rusty is informed by both census data and personal interactions with real life people from the area. 53.5% of the population of Etowah County is between the ages of 18 and 65, the largest percentage in the county. 48.4% is male, and 17.8% have a bachelors degree or higher. Out of 8,616 businesses in the area, 4,938 are owned by men.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Quick Facts: Calhoun County, Alabama, 2020, Prepared by Social Explorer, accessed November 7, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/calhouncountyalabama>.

Ashton is informed by both census data and personal interactions with real life people from the area. 54.6% of the population of Calhoun County is between the ages of 18 and 65, the largest percentage in the county. 48.0% is male, and 84.4% have a high school degree or higher.

no children. Her only international travel experience was her honeymoon cruise to Jamaica, but she does enjoy yearly trips to Gulf Shores, AL. She doesn't watch much television, preferring to read and tend to her vegetable garden. She loves to cook traditional Southern foods that her grandmother taught her, as well as, canning fruits and vegetables for the winter. Ashton hasn't been exposed to Korean culture, and doesn't know much about Korean culture in general.

The personas of Rusty and Ashton help inform the type of people who will be experiencing *South to South*. From these personas, we see a reflection of the insular nature of the communities they are from, and what their lives and interests are like. The elements such as baseball, fried chicken, and strawberry farms may facilitate interest in learning more about South Korean culture in people like Rusty and Ashton. Providing engaging recognizable motifs in relation to another culture but presented in their own community might help reach this segment that might not be otherwise.

### **Visual Exploration**

When thinking about how design can help visually or sensorily encourage travel, decrease fear, and encourage empathy, one must look at the existing resources that are available. As previously discussed in the literature review, two themes presented themselves as a part of fear in regard to travel: risk and lack of familiarity. This visual exploration will focus on mass produced solutions to travel fears such as travel apps as well as museum installations and their cultivation of empathy such as the Tenement Museum in New York.

There is an app for seemingly everything these days including those that help people prepare for travel. Apps like Expedia and Trivago help people plan and book trips, TripIt and

Trip Advisor help create travel itineraries, and there's even an app to help you pack your luggage called DUFL. But what about apps that help decrease fear of travel? According to Wong and Chi, increased tourist knowledge can help reduce perceived risk and hesitation. Popular travel companies such as Fodor's, Lonely Planet, and Frommer's have published travel guides to help readers learn about various destinations for many years. Out of these three notable companies only Lonely Planet currently has an app available. Frommer's does not have any apps to be found past or present. *Fodor's Travel Phrases* was an app that focused on helpful travel phrases in various languages such as Spanish as seen in the App store example, but has been removed from both Apple and Android app stores at the time of this paper.<sup>30</sup> [Fig. 1] *Guides by Lonely Planet* is a digital extension of their physical guidebooks. For a monthly subscription fee along with the purchase of a book, it allows access to audio phrasebooks, offline maps, currency converters that use Magic FX, along with other tips to help one's trip experience.<sup>31</sup>[Fig. 2] While helpful, this app may have a higher initial buy-in from people who may be hesitant of travel or certain destinations to begin with. While not backed by one of the more familiar travel companies, *Culture Trip* combines elements of a booking and a guide app by curating experiences and tours that focus on the culture of a location and are typically led by locals. While it does encourage participants to experience more cultural aspects of a country which may help cultivate empathy, its main objective is to act as a booking agent instead of truly culturally informative, and doesn't serve as any form of preparation to help inform and decrease perceived risk.<sup>32</sup>[Fig. 3] A look into the available travel apps shows a lack of resources that specifically

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<sup>30</sup> "Fodor's Travel Phrases," Fodor, accessed November 20, 2021, <https://apps.apple.com/ca/app/fodors-travel-phrases/id536624091>.

<sup>31</sup> Emily Price, "Lonely Planet's New Trips App Makes You The Travel Guide," *Fast Company*, last modified on August 8, 2017, accessed November 20, 2021, <https://www.fastcompany.com/40448209/lonely-planets-new-trips-app-makes-you-the-travel-guide>.

<sup>32</sup> Esha Nambiar, "Culture Trip Mobile App Redesign," Medium, last modified May 29, 2020, accessed November 20, 2021, <https://medium.com/@eshanambiar/culture-trip-mobile-app-redesign-b3c4030747cc>.

target people from Alabama in a way that can help them create connections between their own culture and that of South Korea or any other culture apart from their own.

A review of museum exhibitions and installations was conducted in regard to how visual designs can create empathetic feelings towards a subject. Exhibits create the opportunity for personal interaction in a way that might not be found digitally. This helps inform the exhibition design by showing how audiences engage with time and place in an exhibition experience.

One intriguing empathy-driven art installation was developed by Lucky Pierre, a Chicago-based art initiative. Last meals given to death row inmates in a Texas penitentiary were recreated and participants were able to sign up for a meal not knowing what they would be given. They were then filmed from above while they either ate or sat with the meal. These videos have been displayed in several galleries.<sup>33</sup> [Fig.4] Lucky Pierre participant Kevin Kaempf said, “I think the participants gain insight into a feeling of comfort for the inmate, because the meal requests clearly come from a memory—perhaps because a meaningful person prepared that dish for the inmate in the past.” Having people actively participate in a moment that many might not allow themselves to think about because of the heavy connotation of the significance of a last meal forces people to step into the proverbial shoes of another person.<sup>34</sup> Using such a common thing like a meal to connect the viewers with the inmates in their last moments allowed for a more personal connection to be made that might not have been thought of otherwise and helps bring about an empathetic response.

In *Fostering Empathy Through Museums*, author Elif M. Gokcigdem uses the Tenement Museum in New York City as an example of how museum and exhibition spaces can help “foster

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<sup>33</sup> “The Art of Empathy.” The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, accessed March 26, 2021, <https://www.saic.edu/news/marketing-communications/art-empathy-0>.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

empathy or counteract biases associated with low empathy.”<sup>35</sup> The Tenement Museum was opened in 1988 by Ruth Abram and Anita Jacobson. The building had been left in ruins for many years after its initial use as a Tenement Building from the 1860s to the 1930s. Now the museum offers tours that explore what life was like for immigrants during that time by walking visitors through a recreation of what the tenement housing looked like years ago including the Moore family apartment that is featured on the tour.<sup>36</sup> [Fig. 5] This allows for participants to visualize themselves in that era and a glimpse into what the immigrant experience was for many people. “The Tenement Museum is renowned for the idea that fostering empathy with people in other places and times leads us to a deeper understanding of analogous situations in our own context.”<sup>37</sup> Gokcigdem asserts that to utilize a participant's perspective in a more effective manner, the audience must be presented with “contextualizing information” in order for them to gain a more “sophisticated perspective taking.”<sup>38</sup> The Tenement Museum does this by providing context to the stories of the families presented in the tour by allowing visitors to view primary resources including legal documents, census records, and old photos. By walking through recreated tenement housing, one can see the familiarity of a home through the lens of the past and the life of an immigrant during the turn of the 19th century.

While travel apps are available to help people navigate new travel experiences and museums have exhibited installations that help viewers empathize with the subject matter, there seems to be room to address a missing design opportunity by creating something specifically targeting the people of northeast Alabama that encourages travel, reduces fear, and fosters

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<sup>35</sup> Elif M. Gokcigdem, ed. *Fostering empathy through museums*. (United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 115-120.

<sup>36</sup> Lib Tietjen, “Father’s Day at 97 Orchard Street,” Tenement Museum, accessed March 5, 2021, <https://www.tenement.org/blog/fathers-day-at-97-orchard-street/>.

<sup>37</sup> Gokcigdem, 115.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 119.

empathy for other cultures. Combining the way that travel apps help disseminate information about other countries to help users familiarize themselves with the destination along with the personal experience of a museum exhibit, I have created an interactive exhibit that allows visitors to learn about similarities between Alabama and South Korea in a designed sensory manner by using recognizable motifs by people from Alabama to facilitate transnational connections and feelings of empathy.

### ***South 2 South: Connection in the Ordinary***

My thesis exhibition entitled, *South 2 South: Connection in the Ordinary*, explores five similarities between South Korea and Alabama. Through research, the need to facilitate a familiar and low-risk experience for users from Alabama in order to help reduce fear became apparent. This concept was inspired by my own trip to South Korea in which I made connections to my home back in Alabama. The five connections presented are humidity, fried chicken, strawberry farms, baseball, and cicadas. These five things stood out to me during my stay. The first being the intense humidity. I arrived in the middle of July and was welcomed by the intense heat and humidity of Seoul which felt similar to an Alabama summer. Something some of my fellow classmates from other parts of the United States were less familiar with. Delicious crispy fried chicken, a comfort food to my Southern palate, was one of the first meals I enjoyed upon arrival. The double fried Korean variation was a delight to eat especially with the myriad of unique sauces to accompany it. I tasted delicious strawberries that had been grown at a strawberry farm in a city called Nonsan which reminded me of the strawberry farm I lived beside in Alabama. Baseball, I learned, was very popular in South Korea, and I was fascinated by the fact they had cheerleaders at their professional games. Lastly, the loud humming of cicadas could

be heard singing through the trees while I walked through parks. A familiar sound that reminded me of hot summer nights back home.

These connections are made using easily recognized imagery and by incorporating the five senses of touch, taste, sight, smell, and sound. The elements are presented in an interactive manner where participants use a guide designed by myself to further explain the connections held by the two places. All five of these examples aren't necessarily specific to Alabama and South Korea, but they are connections that might not be common knowledge to the average person living in the state of Alabama. As mentioned previously, northeast Alabama has a dearth of diversity which presents an opportunity for design to help introduce new cultural information. The purpose of connecting these two places in this way is to help create a sense of familiarity with another culture, helping to dispel some sense of fear or risk by creating a feeling of connection and fostering empathy which in turn would hopefully facilitate a curiosity in learning more about the other culture. The following section will detail the information about each of the five objects presented in *South 2 South* as well as how each is visually represented in the show.

## **Show Elements**

### **Fried Chicken**

When thinking about Korean foods, kimchi and Korean BBQ are just a couple of things that might come to mind. What may not be so widely known is that South Korea has a thriving Fried Chicken scene. In 2017, a reported 36,000 chicken joints could be found across the country.<sup>39</sup> One can find themselves just a stone's throw away from delicious fried chicken in South Korea. Specially cooked by double frying, Korea's version of fried chicken is known for

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<sup>39</sup>Abirami Durai, *How Korean Fried Chicken Became So Popular*, The Star, July 22, 2019, accessed September 9, 2021, <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/food/2019/07/22/popularity-of-korean-fried-chicken>.

being especially crunchy. Added spices and sauces also set the country's fried delight apart. The dish is commonly paired with beer which fits into the strong drinking culture of Korea. This unique pairing is referred to by its nickname *Chimaek*, a combination of "chi" for chicken and "maek" for maekju, the Korean word for beer.<sup>40</sup> Continuing with the trend, a few other chicken nicknames have become a part of the Korean lexicon including: Chicken obsessed fans refer to themselves as *Chideokhu* - combining chicken with "deokhu" which means maniac. For the fans with a discerning palate who can distinguish between multiple chicken brands by taste alone, the moniker *Chimmeliers* has been given which pieces together "chimeak" with "sommelier." Not only can Chimmeliers be able to identify different brands, but they can discuss the different varieties of fried chicken at length.<sup>41</sup>

In America, fried chicken is a staple of southern cuisine. If someone's Southern grandmother isn't cooking fried chicken for Sunday lunch then it can always be found on nearly every street corner from franchises to local mom and pop restaurants. With origins from Scottish and West African cooking, one of the most popular Southern techniques is incorporating buttermilk into the cooking process.<sup>42</sup>

Many Southerners are familiar with the ways in which chicken is fried in the South. In order to share more about the unique way in which Koreans cook their chicken, I have created a card with a classic Korean fried chicken recipe on it that visitors can take with them. This reflects the classic recipe box that can be found in many southern homes filled with recipe cards passed down through the years. Ideally during the show, actual Korean fried chicken would be

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<sup>40</sup> Eun-Young Julia Kim, "Anglicized Korean Neologisms of the New Millennium: An Overview," *English Today*, 32 (2016), 52-60, accessed September 9, 2021, doi:10.1017/S0266078416000250.

<sup>41</sup> Violet Kim, "Watch your wing, KFC! Korean fried chicken (and beer) is here." CNN, last modified June 21, 2015, accessed September 9, 2021, <http://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/south-korea-beer-chicken/index.html>.

<sup>42</sup> Sri Nurbani and Nanda Ayu Riana Dewi, "Designing Verbal Message And Visual Media Of Quick Chicken." In *6th Bandung Creative Movement 2019*, (Telkom University, 2019), 446-450.



present for visitors to taste. During my show, I did not incorporate it at this time due to concerns over the spread of covid. A recreated Korean fried chicken to-go box was on display instead.

[Fig. 6]

## **Baseball**

Baseball is commonly referred to as “America’s favorite pastime”, but did you know that it is also one of the most loved sports in South Korea? In 2017, 62% of the South Korean population reported baseball as their favorite sport making it the number one chosen sport over soccer.<sup>43</sup> It has been reported that baseball was introduced to Korea in 1905 by the Christian missionary Philip L. Gillett in which he taught a group of young Korean men at the YMCA.<sup>44</sup> However, there have been recent reports of documented accounts of baseball being played in the country as early as 1894.<sup>45</sup> Baseball truly rose to popularity with the creation of KBO (Korean Baseball Organization) in 1982 which currently has 10 professional teams located in different parts of the country. Unlike American teams which are named after the city they reside, KBO teams are typically named after the corporations that sponsor them such as the Kia Tigers, LG Twins, Samsung Lions, and Lotte Giants.

One of the biggest differences between Korean and American baseball is the cheer culture surrounding the Korean teams. While it is common for songs to be played as players come to bat during American games, in Korea each team has their own set of cheerleaders led by a cheer master. They lead the crowd in singing the team song as well as songs personalized for each batter. The batter songs are typically popular songs that are customized for each player by

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<sup>43</sup> “South Korea’s Most Popular Sports,” Statista, May 2017, accessed September 10, 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/829536/south-korea-most-popular-sports/>.

<sup>44</sup> Bang-Chool Kim, “Professional Baseball in Korea: Origins, Causes, Consequences and Implications,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 25:3 (2008), 372, DOI: [10.1080/09523360701805811](https://doi.org/10.1080/09523360701805811).

<sup>45</sup> Patrick Bourgo, “Baseball in Korea goes back further than you might think,” *Korea Times*, last modified March 30, 2016, accessed September 10, 2021, [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2017/11/662\\_201442.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2017/11/662_201442.html).

changing a few words.<sup>46</sup> Cheering has such a special presence during the games that the atmosphere has been compared to that of a concert. Many fans use inflatable cheer sticks to wave around and clap during the game. Korean stadium food is also elevated past the typical hamburgers and hotdogs found at American fields. The popular combination of fried chicken and beer, known as “chi-mek,” is a common order in the crowd, and in some stadiums, grilling stations are available to cook pork belly Korean BBQ style.<sup>47</sup>

Alabama has a rich baseball history. The state is the birthplace for several famous players including Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, and Leroy “Satchel” Paige.<sup>48</sup> There are currently four minor league teams across Alabama. The Birmingham Barons, Huntsville Trash Pandas, Mobile BayBears, and the Montgomery Biscuits.<sup>49</sup> In July 2021, the Montgomery Biscuits became the Montgomery Kimchi for one night in honor of Korean Heritage Night to celebrate the growing Korean community in the area. The players wore jerseys with kimchi written in Hangul, the Korean alphabet. The logo was changed from the regular biscuit mascot to that of a jar of kimchi. Fans were also able to sample kimchi during the game. This night was created in partnership with A-KEEP, the Alabama - Korean Education and Economic Partnership.<sup>50</sup>

Fans of American baseball might easily recognize professional players from Major League Baseball. To share famous players from the KBO (Korean Baseball Organization), I designed a baseball card featuring Kang Eui-ji who won the KBO MVP of 2020 along with some

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<sup>46</sup> Jang-won Lim, “Bat flipping and fancy cheerleading: How Korean baseball culture differs from US.” *Korea Herald*, last modified May 7, 2020, accessed September 10, 2021, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200507000888>.

<sup>47</sup> Hakyung Kate Lee, “A look inside South Korean baseball's elaborate 'cheer culture.’” ABC News, last modified October 30, 2017, accessed September 11, 2021, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/inside-south-korean-baseballs-elaborate-cheer-culture/story?id=50817262>.

<sup>48</sup> Doug Wedge, *Baseball in Alabama: Tales of Hardball in the Heart of Dixie*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2018).

<sup>49</sup> “Baseball in Alabama,” *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, accessed September 11, 2021, <http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/s-136>.

<sup>50</sup> Associated Press, “Alabama baseball team temporarily drops Biscuits for Kimchi.” *News 19*, last modified July 17, 2021, accessed September 1, 2021, <https://whnt.com/news/alabama-baseball-team-temporarily-drops-biscuits-for-kimchi/>.

of his baseball statistics.[Fig. 7]Just like the recipe card, this can be taken home by visitors in hopes that they might want to learn more about Korean baseball and its players. Baseballs are on display along with the cards, and a recording of a KBO game will be playing in the gallery to give insight into what a Korean baseball game is like.[Fig. 8]

### **Strawberry Farms**

When thinking of South Korea, the large and bustling city of Seoul might be the first thing that comes to mind, but the country is also home to several rural, countryside areas. Here, one can find a slower pace happening. While mostly hills and mountains, the arable farmland is used to grow crops such as rice, pears, citrus fruits, and other various vegetables. One popular produce that has increased in the last 20 years is strawberries. In 2005, domestically grown strawberries accounted for only 10% of the fruit in the country, but has now grown to 96% as of this year.<sup>51</sup> According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, South Korea's strawberry production ranked third across Asia and seventh globally.<sup>52</sup> Korean strawberries are known for their rich color and sweet taste. Many strawberry farms can be found across the country, and have become a popular outing for Koreans and tourists alike.

The city of Nonsan is the largest producer of strawberries in Korea, and they claim to have some of the sweetest berries in the country. Each year in the month of April, they hold the Nonsan Strawberry Festival to celebrate the city's long history of farming the sweet fruit.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Kyoung Mi Lee , Jae-eun Lee , and Jihae Lee , "Korean Strawberries: Secret of Success," Korea.net, last modified January 25, 2021, accessed September 5, 2021, <https://m.korea.net/english/NewsFocus/Business/view?articleId=194671&page=1>.

<sup>52</sup> "Current Status of Strawberry Breeding in Korea and Introduction of New Varieties," Foodmatenet, last modified September 7, 2021, accessed September 8, 2021, <https://www.foodmatenet.com/2021/09/current-status-of-strawberry-breeding-in-korea-and-introduction-of-new-varieties/>.

<sup>53</sup> "Festivals," Nonsan Tourism, accessed September 5, 2021, <https://www.nonsan.go.kr/english/html/sub03/0302.html>.

Visitors can pick and eat fresh strawberries as well as try different strawberry concoctions such as strawberry jam and even strawberry hot sauce.<sup>54</sup>

In Alabama, strawberries are the 3rd most produced fruit despite its small footprint on the map at 200 square acres of land across the state. Many of the strawberries produced in Alabama are sold directly from farm to consumer either by roadside stand, farmer's market, or a you-pick set up. Strawberry picking is an enjoyable family outing in early spring from April to May. The two most common varieties of strawberry grown are Camarosa and Chandler.<sup>55</sup>

One of my favorite scents is that of fresh strawberries. In order to incorporate the sense of smell into the exhibit, I designed and created strawberry-scented stickers that feature a vector-created strawberry image along with the Korean word for strawberry, Ttalgı, written in the English romanization of it as well as in Hangul. [Fig. 9] Fresh strawberries will be on display to complete the visual representation of the element. [Fig. 10]

## **Weather**

South Korea experiences four distinct seasons with humid, tropical-like summers, mild spring & falls, and snowy, cold winters. According to the Koppen Climate Map, their climate type ranges from Warm Summer Humid Continental in the northern regions to Humid Subtropical in the south.<sup>56</sup> While the winter conditions might differ, Alabamians will feel right at home in Korea's muggy hot summers. A visit to Korea in the month of July would see an

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<sup>54</sup> James F. Hancock, *Strawberries*. Vol. 34, (Boston, MA: CABI, 2020) 93.

<sup>55</sup> "Alabama Extension System Promoting State's Ongoing Strawberry Season," *Opelika Observer*, last modified May 1, 2019, accessed September 5, 2021, <https://opelikaobserver.com/alabama-extension-system-promoting-states-ongoing-strawberry-season/>.

<sup>56</sup> Se JinJeung, Jang Hyun Sung, and Byung Sik Kim, "Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change on Climatic Zones over the Korean Peninsula." *Advances in Meteorology* (2019). *Gale Academic OneFile*, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A611334040/AONE?u=jack26672&sid=ebsco&xid=320f4255>.

average humidity rate of 80%.<sup>57</sup> Comparatively, the average humidity rate in Alabama in July is 74%.<sup>58</sup> One way Koreans beat the heat is by carrying around portable, battery-operated hand fans that can be conveniently found at many stores in a variety of sizes, colors, and fun designs. Even the popular K-Pop boy group, BTS, has a line of fans adorned with their cartoon symbols BT21.

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Every culture has what many refer to as “old wives’ tales” or superstitions that have been passed down throughout the years. One interesting one out of Korea is what is known as “fan death.” Many Koreans, particularly of the older generation, believe that it is dangerous to leave a fan running while one is sleeping as it might cause the person to never wake up resulting in “fan death.” The belief stems from the idea that the fan will cause your body temperature to fall drastically therefore causing death. Although scientists have disproved this theory, some people are still hesitant to run a fan during sleep.<sup>60</sup>

I have designed a sheet featuring the sun pattern I created that can be folded into a fan that the visitors can keep. [Fig. 11] This continues the theme of take home items as well as adding a bit of interaction to this element. The sheet features clear instructions on how to make a fan to help combat the heat of summer. Three electronic hand fans are on display including one that I purchased on my trip to Seoul. Visitors are able to turn on and interact with these items.

[Fig. 12]

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<sup>57</sup> “Climate and Average Weather Year Round in Seoul,” Weather Spark, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://weatherspark.com/y/142033/Average-Weather-in-Seoul-South-Korea-Year-Round>.

<sup>58</sup> Brian Brettschneider, “Oh The Humidity. Which State Is The Most Humid?” *Forbes*, last modified August 23, 2018, accessed November 1, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brianbrettschneider/2018/08/23/oh-the-humidity-why-is-alaska-the-most-humid-state/?sh=1d7adb49330c>.

<sup>59</sup> Jee Hee Kim, “Koreans beat the heat with handheld fans,” *Korea Joogang Daily*, last modified June 29, 2018, accessed November 1, 2021, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2018/06/29/industry/Koreans-beat-the-heat-with-handheld-fans/3050018.html>.

<sup>60</sup> Ari Shapiro, “South Korea’s Quirky Notions About Electric Fans,” NPR, last modified August 9, 2015, accessed November 1, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/08/09/430341089/south-koreas-quirky-notions-about-electric-fans>.

## Cicadas

It's not uncommon, on a hot summer's night in Alabama, to hear the loud chirping of cicadas ringing through the air. A sound of the south can also be heard across the world in South Korea as the Korean cicadas sing out in an excess of 75 decibels. Korea has 15 different cicada species. The two most common have different singing patterns. Robust cicadas sing during lower temps whereas the blackish cicadas sing loudly during warmer temps. Korean cicadas have increasingly grown louder in the last 30 years as the climate has changed to a warmer environment.<sup>61</sup><sup>62</sup><sup>63</sup>

Alabama has 20 different cicada species. Annual cicadas reside in the state; but periodical cicadas that appear every 13 to 17 years can also be found which is only common to the eastern part of the United States. The state of Alabama will see their next group of periodical cicadas in 2024 called Brood XIX.<sup>64</sup> They emerge in odd numbered years to help protect themselves from predators that emerge in even numbered years.<sup>65</sup>

Cicadas provide the perfect opportunity to incorporate sound within the exhibit. I designed baseball-sized cards featuring the cicada pattern I created that contain a QR code. [Fig. 13] This code can be scanned with the camera of smartphones. It will immediately pop up a link to a video that features a walk through a park in Seoul while the cicadas chirp loudly. These

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<sup>61</sup>"Cicada noises make hard for people to sleep at night" Donga, last modified August 6, 2019, accessed September 5, 2021, <https://www.donga.com/en/article/all/20190806/1809817/1/Cicada-noises-make-people-hard-to-sleep-at-night#:~:text=sing%20at%206kHz-,Cicadas%20singing%20in%20the%20summer%20in%20Korea%20is%20nothing%20new,in%20urban%20areas%20since%202000.>

<sup>62</sup> Chan-su Kang , "Cicadas' song keeps people up at night" *Korea Joogang Daily*, last modified July 30, 2012, accessed September 5, 2021, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=2957105>.

<sup>63</sup> Kyong-Seok Ki, Ji-youn Gim, Ki-Sang Yoon, and Jae-Yoon Lee, "Effects of Tropical Night and Light Pollution on Cicadas Calls in Urban Areas," *Korean Journal of Environment and Ecology* 30, no. 4 (2016): 725.

<sup>64</sup> Brian Resnick, "Where billions of cicadas will emerge this spring (and over the next decade), in one map"Vox, last modified April 1, 2021, accessed September 5, 2021, <https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/22362042/cicada-brood-x-map-2021>.

<sup>65</sup> Dr. John Abbott, "The Long Drone is Over, Cicada Season Ends in Alabama," *University of Alabama News*, last modified September 24th, 2019, accessed September 5, 2021, <https://news.ua.edu/2019/09/the-long-drone-is-over-cicada-season-ends-in-alabama/>.

cards can be taken with the visitor so that they can hear the sound whenever desired. Real cicada shells are on display to give visual interest to what is being heard. [Fig. 14]

### **The Design**

The design of *South 2 South* features mostly black and white imagery including logo, pamphlets, and maps of Jacksonville, AL, and Seoul, South Korea. The five objects are presented in rich primary colors that feature a vector image of each object (fried chicken leg, baseball, strawberry, sun, and cicada). [Fig. 15] The inspiration for mostly black and white design to highlight the colorful objects came from two pop culture references, the book *The Giver* by Lois Lowry and the movie *Pleasantville*. In both stories, the main character views life in black and white until they gain knowledge which in turns brings the world around them into color. Therefore, the chosen color palette represents new knowledge presented to the viewer. I picked primary colors to not only draw the eye but create a sense of familiarity and comfort. The hues of the primary colors I have chosen are inspired by colors from both regions as I looked at colors from nature, traditional Korean homes called Hanoks, and prominent sport teams. To encourage future learning, I designed a pamphlet with the information about each object so it could be taken with the participants. [Fig. 16] An accompanying envelope was created so that the takeaways from each item could be easily gathered in one spot. [Fig. 17] Black and white maps of Seoul, South Korea [Fig. 18] and Jacksonville, AL [Fig. 19] were placed on either side of the gallery. Black and white signs with various words in English and Korean were displayed, hanging from the ceiling. [Fig. 20] Simple graphics, primary colors, and interactive elements help create a comfortable, low-risk atmosphere that allow visitors to learn about Alabama and South Korea to help foster empathetic feelings in the exhibit of *South 2 South*.

## **Conclusion**

Through this research, I believe that there is great potential for design to help promote travel and make transnational connections between two cultures in order to reduce fear and encourage empathy. *South 2 South* is a designed sensory experience that allows users to engage in cross-cultural information in an inviting and familiar way with the use of recognizable motifs in order to reduce fear, foster empathy, and encourage travel. The creation of *South 2 South* was informed by research on travel fears, empathy, and transnational relations between South Korea and Alabama. From a review of travel fears, I learned that they can be reduced by disseminating information about new cultures to an audience in a familiar environment. To further reduce fear and facilitate connections, the use of recognizable forms was used in the design. In regard to empathy, cultivation is possible through cross-cultural experiences. *South 2 South* helps facilitate the beginnings of these interactions by presenting new cultural information directly to the more insular communities of northeast Alabama. Through a visual exploration, I learned that there is currently no existing designed resource that connects these two regions by visual communicating similarities in a tailored manner. My hope is that *South 2 South* can be used as a guide to help to connect other cultures in a similar fashion through use of familiar forms and atmospheres in order to help other communities similar to that of northeast Alabama engage in transnational relations.



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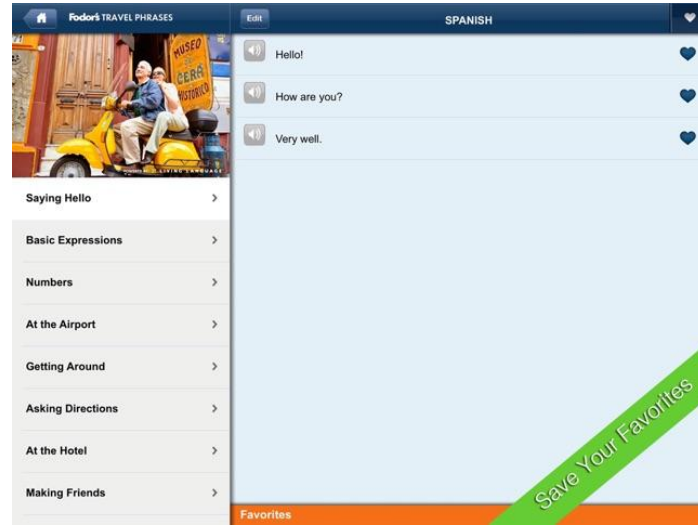
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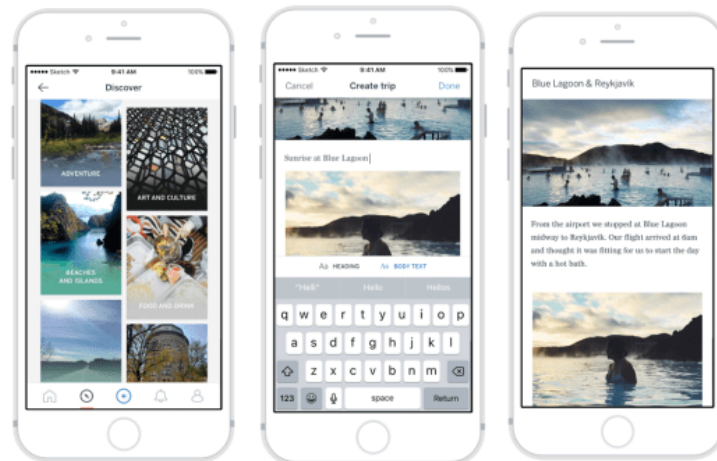
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## Illustrations



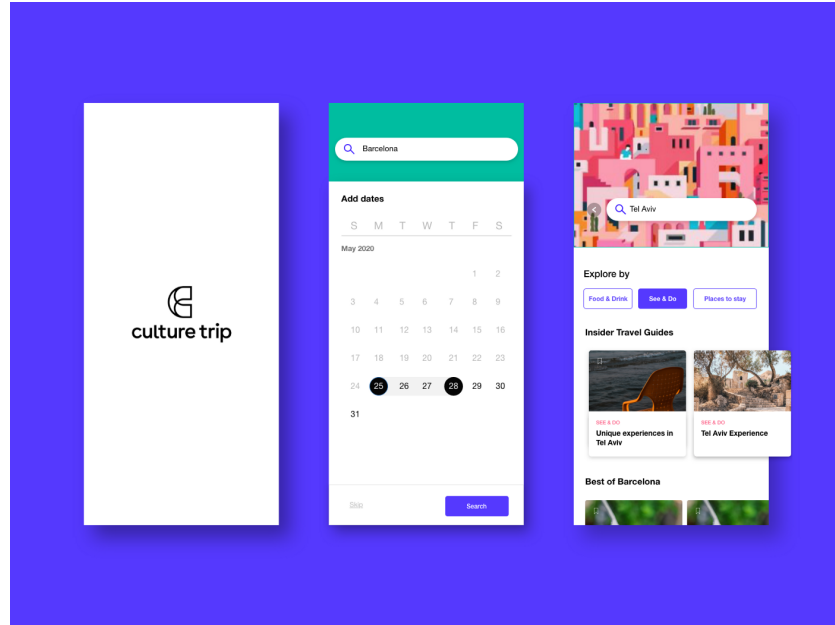
**Figure 1.** Fodor's Travel Phrases, Spanish Phrases Page, Apple App Store

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<https://apps.apple.com/ca/app/fodors-travel-phrases/id536624091>.



**Figure 2.** Lonely Planet, Guides by Lonely Planet, three screen view

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<https://www.fastcompany.com/40448209/lonely-planets-new-trips-app-makes-you-the-travel-guide>.



**Figure 3.** Medium.com, Culture Trip app, three screen view

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**Figure 4.** Lucky Pierre, "Final Meal #307," Performance view

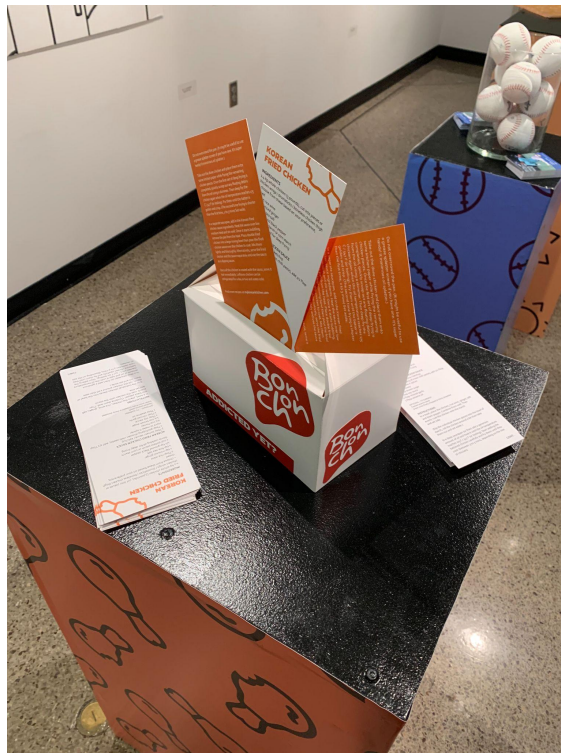
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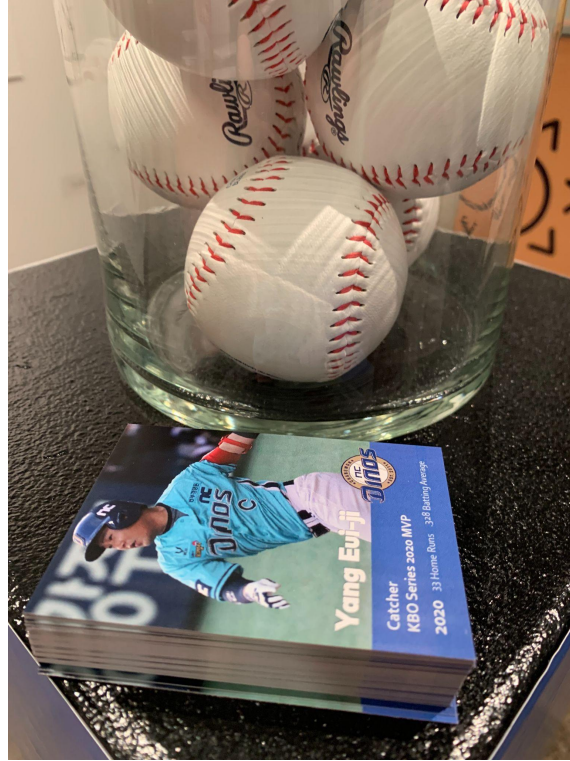
**Figure 5.** The Moore Apartment, Tenement Museum, New York City

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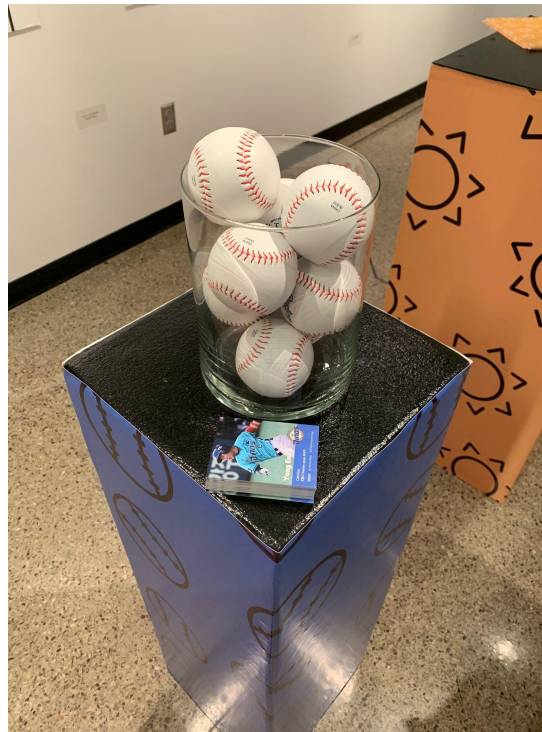


**Figure 6.** Recreated Bonchon Takeout Container with Korean Fried Chicken Recipes on display





**Figure 7.** Baseball card featuring NC Dino's player, Yang Eui-ji



**Figure 8.** Baseballs on display along with baseball cards



**Figure 9.** Strawberry scented stickers featuring a strawberry graphic along with the word Ttalgwi which means strawberry in Korean.



**Figure 10.** Strawberries on display along with stickers.



**Figure 11.** Paper with sun design that can be used to create a fan.



**Figure 12.** Electric hand fans on display along with paper hand fans.





**Figure 13.** Card with cicada design featuring a QR code that will play a video of cicada sounds when scanned.



**Figure 14.** Real cicada shells.



Figure 15. Visitor looking at the *South 2 South* exhibit.

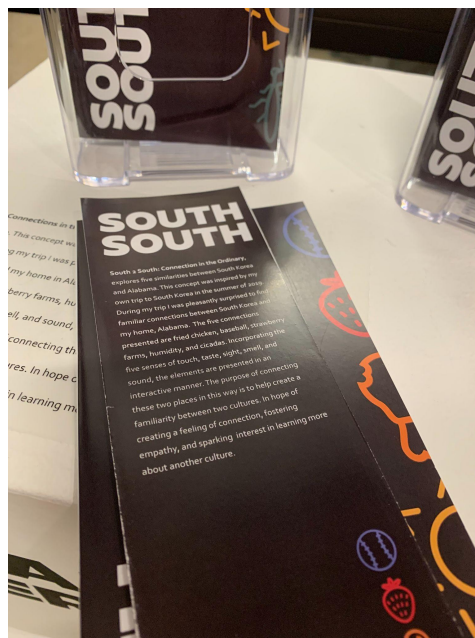


Figure 16. *South 2 South* pamphlet.



**Figure 17.** *South 2 South* envelope containing the informative pamphlet.



**Figure 18.** Black and white map of Seoul, South Korea.





**Figure 19.** Black and white map of Jacksonville, AL.



**Figure 20.** Black and white sign displaying words in both English and Korean.